

I also am pleased that good corporate citizens are involved with helping our children. And I particularly want to point out Toys R Us or Wal-Mart, Home Depot, as well as Ford Motor dealerships, which are providing free child photo IDs, so that parents can provide law enforcement with sharply focused head-and-shoulder pictures along with relevant biological information in the event of emergency. By the end of this year, more than 2½ million children will have been photographed and identified to help recover them if they're ever abducted.

I hope a lot of other companies follow these good citizens' example. I hope you make available resources necessary to help us combat—to fight against abduction and to help save those lives—save the lives of those who have fallen prey to one of the worst crimes in our society.

This White House Conference on Missing and Exploited and Runaway Children is important for America. It just is. And I want to thank you all for coming. This is the beginning of a refocused effort at the Federal level to help save people's lives. This is an attempt—more than an attempt—this is the beginning of a successful strategy implemented at all levels of government and all parts of our society to recognize a real threat and to deal with it, to recognize there are some so evil in our society that they're willing to harm our most precious and most vulnerable citizens, and to be prepared to respond quickly when that happens, to help people prevent it from happening in the first place, to make it clear, if you do it and we catch you, there's going to be serious consequences for you.

We can deal with this problem, because this is America. This is a country full of people who love and care. It's a compassionate and decent nation. This is the beginning of a concerted effort to do our duty as responsible citizens of the greatest country on the face of the Earth.

Again, I want to thank you all for taking your citizenship seriously. I want to thank you for understanding that a patriot is somebody more than who just puts their hand on their heart; a patriot is somebody who is willing to do whatever you can to make this

country the best—continue to be the best on the face of our Earth.

May God bless your efforts. May God bless our children. And may God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:09 p.m. in the Atrium Hall at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center. In his remarks, he referred to Ernie Allen, president and chief executive officer, Carolyn Atwell-Davis, government relations liaison, and John Walsh, co-founder, National Center for Missing and Exploited Children; Sister Mary Rose McGeady, president, Covenant House; Texas State Senator Florence Shapiro; and Jacqueline Marris, who was abducted with Tamara Brooks in Lancaster, CA, on August 1. The President also referred to H.R. 4623, the proposed "Child Obscenity and Pornography Prevention Act of 2002," and S. 2986, the proposed "National AMBER Alert Network Act of 2002."

### **Remarks Announcing Bipartisan Agreement on a Joint Resolution To Authorize the Use of United States Armed Forces Against Iraq**

*October 2, 2002*

**The President.** Thank you all for coming. Today I'm joined by leaders of the House and the Senate from both political parties to show our unity of purpose in confronting a gathering threat to the security of America and to the future of peace.

I want to thank in particular Speaker Hastert and Leader Gephardt, Leader Lott, for the tremendous work in building bipartisan support on this vital issue. I also want to thank Senators Warner, Lieberman, McCain, and Bayh for introducing this resolution, which we've agreed to on the floor of the Senate this morning.

The text of our bipartisan resolution is clear, and it is strong. The statement of support from the Congress will show to friend and enemy alike the resolve of the United States. In Baghdad, the regime will know that full compliance with all U.N. security demands is the only choice and that time remaining for that choice is limited.

On its present course, the Iraqi regime is a threat of unique urgency. We know the treacherous history of the regime. It has waged a war against its neighbors. It has

sponsored and sheltered terrorists. It has developed weapons of mass death. It has used them against innocent men, women, and children. We know the designs of the Iraqi regime. In defiance of pledges to the U.N., it has stockpiled biological and chemical weapons. It is rebuilding the facilities used to make those weapons.

U.N. inspectors believe that Iraq could have produced enough biological and chemical agent to kill millions of people. The regime has the scientists and facilities to build nuclear weapons and is seeking the materials needed to do so.

We know the methods of this regime. They buy time with hollow promises. They move incriminating evidence to stay ahead of inspectors. They concede just enough to escape—to escape punishment and then violate every pledge when the attention of the world is turned away.

We also know the nature of Iraq's dictator. On his orders, opponents have been decapitated and their heads displayed outside their homes. Women have been systematically raped as a method of intimidation. Political prisoners are made to watch their own children being tortured. The dictator is a student of Stalin, using murder as a tool of terror and control within his own cabinet, within his own army, even within his own family. We will not leave the future of peace and the security of America in the hands of this cruel and dangerous man.

None of us here today desire to see military conflict, because we know the awful nature of war. Our country values life and never seeks war unless it is essential to security and to justice. America's leadership and willingness to use force, confirmed by the Congress, is the best way to ensure compliance and avoid conflict. Saddam must disarm, period. If, however, he chooses to do otherwise, if he persists in his defiance, the use of force may become unavoidable.

The course of action may bring many sacrifices. Yet delay, indecision, and inaction could lead to a massive and sudden horror. By timely and resolute action, we can defend ourselves and shape a peaceful future. Together with the Congress, I will do everything necessary to protect and defend our country.

In accepting this responsibility, we also serve the interests and the hopes of the Iraqi people. They are a great and gifted people, with an ancient and admirable culture, and they would not choose to be ruled by violence and terror. The people of Iraq are the daily victims of Saddam Hussein's oppression. They will be the first to benefit when the world's demands are met. Americans believe all men and women deserve to be free. And as we saw in the fall of the Taliban, men and women celebrate freedom's arrival.

The United States will work with other nations. We'll work with other nations to bring Saddam to account. We'll work with other nations to help the Iraqi people form a just government and a unified country. And should force be required, the United States will help rebuild a liberated Iraq.

Countering Iraq's threat is also a central commitment on the war on terror. We know Saddam Hussein has longstanding and ongoing ties to international terrorists. With the support and shelter of a regime, terror groups become far more lethal. Aided by a terrorist network, an outlaw regime can launch attacks while concealing its involvement. Even a dictator is not suicidal, but he can make use of men who are. We must confront both terror cells and terror states, because they are different faces of the same evil.

I brought this issue to the attention of the world, and many, many countries share our determination to confront this threat. We're not alone. The issue is now before the United States Congress. This debate will be closely watched by the American people, and this debate will be remembered in history. We didn't ask for this challenge as a country, but we will face it, and we will face it together.

As the vote nears, I urge all Members of Congress to consider this resolution with the greatest of care. The choice before them could not be more consequential. I'm confident that members of both parties will choose wisely.

I appreciate Members of Congress who are willing to address you all, starting with the Speaker of the House, Denny Hastert. [At this point, Speaker J. Dennis Hastert, Representative Richard A. Gephardt, Senator John W. Warner, Senator Joseph I.

*Lieberman, and Senator John McCain made brief remarks.]*

**The President.** Thank you all for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:15 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Speaker Hastert, Representative Gephardt, Senator Warner, Senator Lieberman, and Senator McCain. The Office of the Press Secretary also made available the text of the Joint Resolution To Authorize the Use of United States Armed Forces Against Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

**Remarks at a Reception for  
Gubernatorial Candidate Robert L.  
Ehrlich, Jr., in Baltimore, Maryland  
October 2, 2002**

**The President.** Thank you all very much. Thanks. The reason this is such a successful event is because people know that Bob Ehrlich will make a great Governor for Maryland. I believe it, and that's why I'm here. I believe that's the reason why Democrats and Republicans support this good man—because he's honest, he's hard-working, and he's got a positive vision for everybody who lives in the State of Maryland.

I'm here because this man is somebody who wants to unite this State, not divide it. And I'm here because he married well. I appreciate Kendel, and I know Bob does as well. And I want you to know, I appreciate Laura too. She's sorry she can't be here tonight. She is—you know, when I married her, she was a public school librarian. She was living in Texas, and so was I. The truth of the matter is she didn't like politics then. [Laughter] And she wasn't too fond of politicians either. [Laughter] And here she is, married to me. [Laughter]

But people, as they've gotten to know Laura, now know the reason why I asked her to marry me. She's really a fine, fine lady. A lot of her buddies are wondering why she said yes. [Laughter] But she does send her best and sends all her support to the Ehrlichs and wishes them all the best and joins me

in urging the people of Maryland to give this good man a chance to be the Governor of this important State.

I have known the next Lieutenant Governor for a while. He's a good, solid citizen of the State of Maryland. He'll work well with Bob. It is an honor to be on the podium with the next Lieutenant Governor of the State of Maryland, Michael Steele. And I had the honor of meeting his good wife, Andrea, and I appreciate Andrea standing by her man during this tough campaign here. Campaigns are hard. They're not easy on a family. But I appreciate—I appreciate her joining Michael in this race.

I'm honored to be back with former Congressman, soon-to-be Congresswoman Helen Bentley. I figure that when she wins, she'll be telling me what to do. [Laughter] And those of you know, who know Helen, know that I'd better listen. [Laughter] It's great to see Helen. I love her spirit. I know she's going to win.

I'm also proud to be here with Ellen Sauerbrey, who's the national committee-woman. I want to thank Chairman Louis Pope of the Republican Party. I want to thank all the grassroots activists who are here. I want to thank you for—

**Audience member.** [Inaudible] [Laughter]

**The President.** I didn't ask for any speeches; I just said—[laughter]. Okay, let me tell you what you're going to have to do then. [Laughter] I want to thank you for what you're going to do, which is to turn out the vote.

Listen, a lot of you never get thanked enough. I'm thanking you. I'm thanking you for dialing the phones and putting up the signs and for mailing the letters. I'm thanking you for going to your community centers and your coffee shops. I'm thanking you for supporting this ticket ahead of time, because they need your help, and they want your work. You've got to talk it up between now and election day. And you've got to find those Ehrlich voters and make sure they go to the polls, and this man will be your next Governor.

And there's some reasons why. You need somebody who can manage your government, somebody who knows how to balance